

Finding Aid to the Clarkson Crane Papers (1997-46)

Circa 1894-1992 (Bulk dates 1924-1974)

1 carton, 3 boxes (2 linear feet)

Acquisition:

The Clarkson Crane papers were donated by Clyde Evans, Crane's long term companion in 1998.

Access:

The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation:

[Identification of item], Clarkson Crane Papers, 1997-46, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Publication Rights:

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Processed by:

Willie Walker, April 1998; finding aid revised by Marjorie Bryer, March 2011. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Creator:

Crane, Clarkson, 1894-1971

Biographical Information

Clarkson Crane (1894-1971) was a writer and Lecturer in English Literature at the University of California Extension School.

He was born in Chicago on September 20, 1894, the only child of Harold Osland Crane and Elizabeth Clarkson Crane. His parents were from well-to-do Chicago families, and Clarkson was raised in the privileged world of Chicago's Near North Side. He attended the Chicago Latin School until his family moved to the Marysville, California area around 1910. Crane graduated from the Thacher School in Ojai, California the following year. It had always been assumed Clarkson would attend one of the Ivy League universities, but a financial reversal that severely affected the family fortune prevented him from obtaining that goal. He instead enrolled in school at the University of California, in Berkeley, from which he graduated in 1916. While at Berkeley he contributed material to the campus literary publication, *The Occident*, and worked on the campus humor publication, *The Pelican*, and the yearbook *Blue and Gold*.

In 1917, after a year of writing, Crane joined the United States Army along with several Berkeley friends. He became an ambulance driver during the war, and took part in the campaigns of Aisne and Champagne in 1918, and was later given the Croix de Guerre Citation for bravery under fire. He was honorably discharged from the Army at the Presidio in San Francisco in 1919.

Over the next several years Crane continued to write, at his uncle's home in Carmel, in San Francisco, and in New York. During this period he had several stories published in *The Smart Set* and *The Dial*. In an extended visit to Paris in the mid-1920s, Crane wrote his first, and most successful novel, *The Western Shore*. Returning to San Francisco in 1926, he became a Lecturer in English Literature, and in English Grammar, at the University of California Extension School, and was a night reference librarian at the Mechanics Library in San Francisco.

In the same year, Crane met a young native Californian, Clyde Evans, through a mutual friend. A romance ensued that turned into a lifelong relationship; when Crane died in 1971 he and Clyde had celebrated 47 years together. During this period he also met a young lesbian poet named Elsa Gidlow. Elsa and her companion Tommy (Violet Henry-Anderson) formed a lasting friendship with Crane and Evans. Both lived for a time on Joice Street above San Francisco's Chinatown, and Clarkson's letters to Gidlow (see the Elsa Gidlow Papers, 1991-16) hint at the strength of this relationship, based in part on their common interest in writing.

Crane wrote nine novels, three of which were published in his lifetime: *The Western Shore* (1925), *Mother and Son* (1946), and *Naomi Martin* (1947). *Mother and Son* was translated into French and published as *Mère et Fils* by Éditions Du Dauphin in 1948. A paperback edition of *Naomi Martin* was published as *Frisco Gal* by Novel Library in 1949. Crane also published over a dozen stories between 1920 and 1961, and wrote at least a dozen more. Mr. Evans arranged for reprinting of *The Western Shore* in 1974.

Scope and Content of Collection

The bulk of the Clarkson Crane papers consists of published and unpublished novels and short stories and other writings by this author and lecturer in English literature at the University of California Extension School. Crane (1894-1971) published three novels and over a dozen stories during his lifetime. His most successful work was "The Western Shore," published in 1925. The collection includes editions of all his published novels, as well as one of "Last Adventure," which Crane translated from the original journal of Albert Bernard de Russailh. Crane and his companion, Clyde Evans, were together for 47 years. The collection also contains correspondence, including from Crane to Evans, between Crane and his parents and with publishers; materials related to their lifelong friend, the lesbian poet Elsa Gidlow; personalia; and photographs of Clarkson, Evans and their friends and family. The photographs date back to the 19th Century but the bulk of the materials are from 1924-1974. Also included are materials related to the Clarkson and Crane families.

Related Collections at GLBTHS include

Finding Aid to the Clarkson Crane Papers
GLBT Historical Society

1997-46
<http://www.glbthistory.org/research/index.html>

Elsa Gidlow Papers, # 91-16 As mention above, Gidlow was a long-time friend of Clarkson Crane. Her papers include a handful of letters from Crane written in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Joseph R Kappes Papers, #97-47. Kappes was a friend of Crane and Evans. His photo album, containing several photos of Clarkson and Clyde, was donated to GLHS by Mr Evans in 1997.

Container List

Carton 1

Novels, Published

- Folder 1: The Western Shore Harcourt Brace & Company, 1925. Inscribed to Clyde Evans
- Folder 2: Last Adventure Translated from the original journal of Albert Bernard de Russailh by Clarkson Crane, Westgate Press, San Francisco 1931
- Folder 3: Mother and Son Harcourt Brace & Company, 1946. Inscribed to Clyde Evans
Mère et Fils Éditions Du Dauphin, 1948 (paper)
- Folder 4: Naomi Martin Harcourt Brace & Company, 1947. Inscribed
- Folder 5: Frisco Gal Novel Library Edition of Naomi Martin, 1949

Novels, Unpublished

- Folder 6: The Cambrians Typescript
- Folders 7-8: The One and the Many Typescript copy in two volumes
- Folder 9: The Lotus-Eater Photocopy of revised version. Original in Bancroft Library
- Folder 10: Passing Stranger (also called The Secret Life). Photocopy. [Original in Bancroft Library]
- Folder 11: People in the Sun Photocopy of revised version. Original in Bancroft Library
- Folder 12: The Bronze God Bound Typescript

Box 1

Stories, Published

- Folder 1: *The Beach*, in The New Caravan Kreymborg, Alfred , Mumford, & Rosenfeld. Norton & Co 1936
- Folder 2: *Snipe*, in Atlantic Monthly (year?) Torn Fragments of First Published Crane Work
- Folder 3: *Renewal*, in Dial, March 1925
- Folder 4: *Theme With Variations*, in The Bookman, June 1929
- Folder 5: *A Meeting*, in Hesperian, Winter 1930
- Folder 6: *Meat*, Coast Magazine, November 1940
- Folder 7: *The End of It All*, in ONE, August 1956
- Folder 8: *Un Soir d'Orange*, in Arcadie, October 1956
- Folder 9: *The Boys*, in Der Kreis, January 1958
- Folder 10: *Tante Anna et Oncle Joë*, in Arcadie, March 1959

Stories, Unpublished

- Folder 11: Leontium (circa 1923)
- Folder 12: Old Friends

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- Folder 13: Passing Stranger
- Folder 14: On Winter's Traces
- Folder 15: Death in a Room (2 copies)

Box 2

Stories, Unpublished

- Folder 1: Station CGY
- Folder 2: Aunt Anna & Uncle Joe (published in French in Arcadie, March 1959)
- Folder 3: Julia Coburn

Stories Translated Crane

- Folder 4: The New Butcher Boy, by Yves Cerny
- Folder 5: The Old Cavalryman, by Yves Cerny
- Folder 6: Sep Poemoj de Katulo (To Esperanto)

Other Writings of Clarkson Crane

- Folder 7: Notes From Inside Cover of The Bronze God
- Folder 8: Notes From One and the Many
- Folder 9: Notes From The Cambrians
- Folder 10: Notes of Clarkson Crane From Daybook, 1960-1971
- Folder 11: Miscellaneous Notes

Literary Miscellany

- Folder 12: Letter Praising The Western Shore by Mary Elisabeth Brown, 1925
- Folder 13: Reviews of The Western Shore (reprint), 1986
- Folder 14: Cover Fragments, The Western Shore
- Folder 15: Reviews of Mother and Son, 1946
- Folder 16: Contracts with Harcourt, Brace, & Company
- Folder 17: Information About and Writing From Elsa Gidlow
- Folder 18: Documents Related to Esperanto
- Folder 19: Notes of Clyde Evans about Clarkson Crane and his Writings

Correspondence

- Folder 20: Correspondence to Parents from Europe, 1924-26
- Folder 21: Correspondence to Parents, in reference to The Western Shore, 1924-26
- Folder 22: Correspondence with the University of Pennsylvania
- Folder 23: Correspondence with the University of California at Berkeley, 1948, 1976
- Folder 24: Correspondence with the Oakland Public Library
- Folder 25: Correspondence to Clyde Evans, 1920s -1930s
- Folder 26: Correspondence Between Clyde Evans and Peregrine Smith Books, 1974-1985
- Folder 27: Correspondence Between Clyde Evans and Oscar Lewis (Book Club of California), 1974
- Folder 28: Correspondence Between Clyde Evans and Eric John Abrahamson, 1986-1992

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Folder 29: Correspondence From Eric Garber, 1979-1983

Personalia

Folder 30: Biographical Information About Clarkson Crane

Folder 31: Clarkson Family Genealogy, 1951

Folder 32: Letter of Introduction for Clarkson Crane from Vance Thompson to William E. Lewis, 1916

Folder 33: Crane's Croix de Guerre Citation from France, 1918

Folder 34: Crane's Honorable Discharge from United States Army, 1919

Folder 35: Memorabilia of Clarkson Crane

Folder 36: Papers Relating to Death of Clarkson Crane

Box 3 Photographs

Folder 1: Clarkson, Clyde and Friends

Folder 2: Clarkson Crane Childhood and Family

Folder 3: Framed Family Photos

Folder 4: Clarkson Crane Portraits (some duplicates)

Carton 3 Clarkson and Crane family papers

Three photograph albums; 6 encased photographs; Thomas Taylor's journal and personalia; Bessie Clarkson's sketch and notebook; letters from John Clarkson to his mother; letters to the Crane family to Anna High Clarkson; personalia related to Benjamin Crane's death; letters from Benjamin to Myron Crane; and letters to Harold Osland Crane from his Aunt Kate.